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**MULTIMODALITY OF CULTURAL CONTENT IN ENGLISH  
COURSEBOOKS FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION**

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***Abstract***

Young learners (YLS) learn languages and experience multimodality, being exposed to various resources of meaning from the early age. They are challenged by modes while learning from English language teaching (ELT) materials. The materials are the important semiotic resources as well as cultural and social artefacts that influence children's perception and holistic development. They serve both as a mirror and window reflecting the current educational policy, linguistic and didactic approaches, culture and social behaviours. The aim of the paper is to identify the multimodal aspects of cultural content offered in ELT coursebooks in primary schools. There are two major questions of the research project. *What are the characteristic features of multimodality in English coursebooks for older YLS? What are the image-language relations in cultural content of English coursebooks for older YLS?* The project involves multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) and follows Stöckl's framework. There are two approaches and two stages involved. The quantitative approach depicts the amount of image, language, sound and music modes in ELT coursebooks for older children. The qualitative approach relates to the descriptions of image-language relations in the cultural content. The image-language relations bring the data on the inner construction of the visual and verbal input in ELT materials including cultural sections. The amount, intensity and character of the visual and verbal content changes in ELT materials respectively with the age of learners. The role of image seems to decrease with the years of learning and abdicate in favour of the written messages. It is hoped that the project will bring supportive implications for those interested in materials development and visual teaching.

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**Keywords:** ELT materials, multimodality, visual methodologies, cultural content, young learners.



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## 1. Introduction

The world of communication has been continually changing in the period of social, economic, cultural and technological variations. Globalisation with its different impacts is recognisable everywhere leading to the fast distribution of messages, communication, various representations and meanings, which belong to culture (Painter, Martin, & Unsworth, 2013:2-3). In recent years, there have been changes at the level of media and dissemination including a shift from a book to a screen, from letters to image. The changes are reflected in ELT materials and cultural content for YLs. The investigations of learning and teaching materials during MDA is an effective way of linking areas of linguistics (language acquisition, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, discourse analysis and pragmatics) to improve effectiveness of materials for education (Tomlinson, 2001:71).

Numerous studies have attempted to investigate intercultural education in the framework of language education, which involves teaching the target language plus culture. YLs are to acquire intercultural communicative competence (ICC) with affective (attitudes), cognitive (knowledge) and action-oriented (skills) aspects listed by Byram in 1997. The latest tendency is to focus on culture learning outcomes such as personal competence, knowing oneself, the abilities of the learners. The outcomes involve an interaction of mind, body and heart as well as changes at the level of identity, adaptation, culture-general understanding, social change, communicative and intercultural competence to result in culture-specific understanding (Moran, 2001:118-119).

Central to the intercultural language education is the concept of intercultural communicative skills offered in ELT coursebooks for YLs particularly (Pulverness, & Tomlinson, 2013:444). To support YLs in development of ICC, appropriate resources should be available for the users (parents, teachers and children). YLs are to practise skills, gather knowledge needed for understanding cultures to communicate successfully with individuals from other nations (Hall, 2012:230). Presently intercultural teaching involves two systems: the learner's native culture and the target language culture. YLs develop ICC and increase sensitivity to deal with intercultural communicative situations through their own identity. The process is simultaneously intracultural as YLs are exposed to their native culture (Marczak, 2010:15-17; Tomlinson, 2013a:29).

Recent subject literature focuses on the ethnographic perspective of teaching culture when YLs are to discover cultural aspects for themselves. Research focus on the investigation of language and culture as one unit (Hall, 2016:149-154). It is assumed that teaching languages and learning cultures will lead to positive linguistic and cultural outcomes. Currently intercultural teaching involves learning of the target language culture and home culture. YLs are to achieve socio-pragmatic competence across cultures (Brewster, Ellis & Girard, 2002:146-150; Pulverness, & Tomlinson, 2013:452).

The issue of ICC has grown in applied linguistics including materials development. The current match with the published ELT materials for intercultural education refers to four dimensions knowledge of self and others, awareness of self and others, attitudes towards the self and others plus skills of exploring, interpreting, relating and interacting. Byram and Masuhara list a few dilemmas. How these intercultural objectives are to be reflected in ELT materials for YLs? What kinds of multimodal materials may be suitable for multi-cultural (multi-linguistic) YLs in the globalized and glocalised world? What cultural content should be included in ELT materials for YLs? (Byram, & Masuhara, 2013:143-150).

Certainly, ELT materials for YLs should cater for the dynamic nature of intercultural language education and multimodality of resources.

Cultural content in ELT materials is very important particularly in the context of linguistic relativity. Then, further questions appear. Which English speaking culture should be stressed on? How does culture influence child's perception of the world? How does culture shape language skills? (Brewster, Ellis and Girard, 2002:146-150; Field, 2011:49). Responses to these questions vary. They are shaped by the impact of culture on YLs' language and thoughts. As the theory of linguistic relativity states each language communicates a world view. Consequently, our perception of the world is formed by the culture and language we learn and experience (Field, 2011:111).

A subject literature shows a considerable cultural impact on YLs' self-understanding and perception of the world around. YLs learn English from the materials, experience a new process of making-meaning, participate in acculturation and partial defamiliarization of their language and culture. YLs change their perception of the world and modify their cultural and linguistic awareness (Pulverness & Tomlinson, 2013:447-448). The potential for the successful learning is based on the active engagement that takes place among others between a learner and coursebook (Mourão, 2015:200-214).

It is assumed that YLs' ability to recognise patterns of mixed capabilities (visual and verbal ones) will be vital for future changes in education. It is predicted that YLs may have difficulties learning from books with the verbal description of reality only. They will need interactive simulations with visual and sound elements. The abilities to think in different modes may become very useful. Though, there is strong culturally reinforced left shift in the European tradition, many achievements in sciences, mathematics and literature relied on visual modes of thoughts with images (West, 2009:24-28, 217-218).

The visual language has been an important component of human culture from the period of cave paintings and hieroglyphs. It is commonly agreed that the visual aspect is dominant in the cultural construction in Western societies. It is the vital element for understanding the modern world that is ocular-centric. Visual literacy is culturally specific with the universal symbols globally comprehended but also many images are culture-specific (Gangwer, 2009: IX-XI, 3-11). Values and meanings are attached to the visual space related to the convention of writing from left to right. Consequently, Western visual communication is widespread by the global and cultural media. The process is balanced by regionality, different lifestyles, cultures and use of visual design (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006:4-5; Rose, 2012:2-4).

YLs can develop skills in critical visual thinking and media literacy as currently they have been bombarded with visual forms of media from early childhood. The latest neurological research prove that the great visual talents are linked with verbal difficulties and learning problems. It is assumed that visual-spatial abilities will be an important element in the creative accomplishments. It is then the purpose for visual teaching at schools to support learning with the use of images, from the visual content in the context of culture (West, 2009:293-307). The challenge is to teach, learn and develop critical visual thinking in primary schools. YLs can use and design various visual forms including graphic organisers, mind-maps, flowcharts and visual diaries to comprehend and remember facts. It is known that we can process visual information sixty thousand times faster than they process a text due to our capabilities of brain. Visual content is encoded and processed by the brain's language centres. It is assumed that the visual processing skills in the viewer's visual cortex involve visual acuity, eye alignment, depth

perception, eye flexibility, visual recognition, visual memory, visual tracking and eye-hand-body coordination (Gangwer, 2009:37-39).

### **1.1. ELT materials and cultural content**

In this paper ELT materials are perceived as key classroom tools designed to facilitate English language learning (ELL) (Gray, 2013:3) while coursebooks are examined at the level of the page (Tomlinson, 2013a:15-36; Harwood, 2014:11). ELT materials are cultural artefacts which indicate meanings about the target language associated with ways of being and living, manners of using this language and sets of values. They endorse relations regarding social class and shape learners' roles outside the classroom. They convey messages about behaviours in the hidden curriculum. They are unique to a specific culture created and adapted by community members. The dilemma is concerned with the ideological area and a question what implicit messages are being presented through the visual and verbal content.

ELT materials transfer social and cultural meanings. The latest distinction between English as a globalised language and a foreign language (FL) has a significant implication for understanding and design of ELT materials as much of their content is still based on an English FL view. Representations of the BANA countries (Britain, Australasia and North America) tend to dominate in ELT materials. The dilemma is whose English and whose culture are represented in ELT materials. The popular solution is to include both a range of global and local contexts to offer a variety of perspectives. It is important to consider sociocultural differences, not only differences between the BANA cultures and learners' culture (Graves & Garton, 2014:270-272). The latest trend is to move towards the sociocultural perspective and explore how English users interact within their own community and with "other" groups (Hurst, 2014:24).

Analysing the cultural content in ELT materials, YLs encounter and experience different cultural information, practices and perspectives. The common procedure is to gather information, develop skills, discover explanations and reflect on one's self. The cultural experience involves four categories of cultural comprehension: knowing how, knowing about, knowing why and knowing oneself (Moran, 2001:18, 139). ELL involves intercultural encounters such as the interaction with ELT multimedia materials (Marczak, 2010:18). However, ELT artefacts can appear in numerous places and social situations (Moran, 2001:50; Gray, 2013:2-5; Hadley, 2014:210-211, Garton & Graves, 2014:5). As cultural artefacts, they are examined with "a consideration of the culture within which this artefact is produced and the prevailing discourses that have shaped it, (...) and its role in influencing current and future discourses" (Kullman, 2013:17).

There are many definitions of materials. Following Richards' division of ELT materials into global, localised and local ones, the localised type of coursebook has been accepted for this investigation. These are the global coursebooks adapted to the learners' background and national curriculum statement implemented for English courses in a specific country. This type of coursebooks are context-sensitive teaching materials. They are beneficial in terms of contextualisation, linguistic contrasts, intercultural reflection and facilitation of learning. The most important here is an intercultural reflection to develop YLs' awareness of cultures, which are depicted multimodally in culture sections (Richards, 2014:38-45).

In recent years, ELT materials have been evaluated in detail. Global coursebooks have been criticised for an anglocentric view of the world and cultural realities not motivating to learners studying outside English-speaking countries. ELT materials have been regarded as a form of cultural imperialism transferring “western” values reflected in content. Presently, the tendency is to design coursebooks following PARSNIP (no reference to politics, alcohol, religion, sex, narcotics, -isms) (McGrath, 2013:9-112; Garton & Graves, 2014:3). Messages may be communicated in the cultural content through characters, gender and age issues, language varieties, situations, lifestyles, topics and visuals, for example a specific type of images. Generally, ELT materials tend to reflect progressive and politically acceptable values as well as universal human needs. A gender-neutral style of illustrations is implemented with all physical types, avoiding images with stereotypical association (Richards, 2014:27).

Other studies present a balanced approach to ELT global materials. Namely, Garton and Graves (2014:3-7) list both advantages and disadvantages of the global coursebooks. These coursebooks offer different cultural perspectives and places in the cultural content. The disadvantage is that they do not represent the local culture and lifestyles. They also fail to represent real life and issues. As a rule, they present a middle-class view of the world, promoting individualism, mobility and cosmopolitanism where learners are perceived as consumers (Richards, 2014:27). There are signs of cultural relativism and more pluralistic representations traced in recently published coursebooks (Pulverness & Tomlinson, 2013:444).

As far as the cultural content in ELT global materials is concerned, YLs encounter various, familiar or less familiar contexts and characters. The implication is that the users of these materials may follow the principle of localization, use only the parts that are relevant to YLs, provide additional materials to meet YL's needs and substitute the pictures or names (McGrath, 2013:67; Harwood, 2014:4-5). One of the solution is to include suggestions for localizing texts, tasks and illustrations in the global coursebooks (Tomlinson, 2013b:153; Garton & Graves, 2014:5-6).

ELT materials for YLs include a vast number of images while school assessments required from children are based on the writing forms. The media outside school involve visual and verbal elements, sounds and other elements designed coherently as one component – the multimodal texts. However, skills of visual literacy are rarely trained at primary school but very important in social context later in life (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006:16-17, 23-2). YLs' language acquisition requires frequent expose to the target language in the authentic use during communication (Tomlinson, 2015:282). These conditions can be provided by ELT multimodal materials, which are available at the Polish publishing market in a considerable amount.

## **1.2. Multimodality of ELT materials**

ELT materials are defined in this project as semantic resources for representation of the cultural content. They are socially formed and redesigned. To analyse cultural content, general principles of means and processes of meaning-making in culture and mode should be accepted. It is assumed that the signs are conjunctions of forms and meanings based on the designer's interest (Kress, 2010:10-11). The current coursebooks are visually appealing with numerous layout, extensive use of colour, state-of-the-art photographs, drawings, illustrations, cartoons, computer-screen and magazine-style format (McGrath, 2013:6). Several studies have revealed that coursebooks have a magazine-like appearance or an internet-

like one. The titles of ELT coursebooks reflect ELL as a journey or a cross-cultural experience (Gray after Richards, 2014:20-21). Content in ELT coursebooks leads to various picture-word dynamic, image-language relations, interacting with each other partially or wholly. The visual and verbal content provide YLs with information by means of their specific forms independently. For example, picturebooks are social, cultural and historic documents to be seriously considered. They can be investigated in terms of discourse level meanings, visual meanings integrated with verbal texts, semantic relations formed by sequences of images. A picture book is a bimodal (bi-semiotic) form of text where the visual modality is equally important as the verbal one in generating meanings (Painter, Martin & Unsworth, 2013:1-10).

Previous studies have reported about overwhelming dominance of colour pictures to black and white (presently limited to the historical photos) and dominance of photos to drawings. The tendency is to include the colour photos and drawings, which show straight portraits and actions. Each illustration has got a few activities attached. These are functional illustrations (to make ELL easier to comprehend), stimulating illustrations (to motivate mental and linguistic response) and facilitating illustrations (to define words or support achievement). It is generally stated that majority of illustrations are used only for decorative and informative purposes in ELT coursebooks. A more functional typology of illustrations recommended for ELT materials include such types as interpretational, transformational and organisational illustrations (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006:16-17; Hill, 2013:158-161; Hurst, 2014:21-22).

ELT materials have undergone considerable changes in the semiotic work of design over the last seventy years. To name a few, texts consist of writing and images organised in the layout of a page while each unit is organised by content. A page in a coursebook determines what is represented, how is presented and communicated in the content in ELT materials is designed by the possibilities for the site of appearance. Consequently, a page becomes a semiotic unit and simultaneously a unit of meaning. A major change refers to the graphical realisation of educational interest. The layout of appearance seems to be a visual realization of new social relations among the users (learners, teachers and parents). Design has become a key factor in the semiotic realization with the specific use of ordering and space following the participants' perspective. It is stated that the logic of layout dominates in the design of materials. Nowadays, coursebook authors work with a team of experts, illustrators, editors and even teachers to design ELT coursebooks. Each of them uses specific resources, modes and discourses to complete the whole semiotic work. (Kress, 2010:141-142).

ELT materials are interactive artefacts of English language and culture that can be exploited in various manners (Harwood, 2014:10-11). They form and transfer messages with shapes, structures and content for communication and interpretation. The logic of writing forms the order in the book while the logic of the image forms the order of the screen. Writing appears on the screen but is subordinated to the logic of the image. Similarly, image appears on the page but is subordinated to the logic of writing. (Kress, 2010:28-35). Therefore, image-language relations seem to be the most interesting in the contemporary texts. It is possible for the readers to design the order of the text for themselves. An author becomes a provider of information and context that have been arranged in relation to the assumed characteristics of the visitors. There is a shift from the dominance of writing as the main carrier of meanings to an increasing role of image. Namely, the quantity of writing has decreased while the number of images in a page increased. A shift in image-language relations is considerable in terms modes, their

different uses and functions. Images appear to be relatively difficult to analyse as they are composed of discrete entities. In ELT coursebooks, a visual representation may be counted as one semiotic entity or two ones (Kress, 2010:46-47). The relation between image and writing altered in ELT coursebooks indicates their equal position and participation in semiotic production. As it was mentioned earlier in this paper, texts can be realized through several resources. Each mode has got a different set of units and entities. It seems that a designer and a mode of image dominates in the multimodal communication. In this perspective, several questions can be stated. Which mode is the best for the cultural content in ELT coursebooks? Which mode is the most appealing to YLs?

YLs are expected to accept the information offered in ELT coursebooks. The relationship is reflected in the structures and composition of the instructional design. The dilemma is linked with the use of illustrations indicating YLs' position in ELT coursebook. The textual function focuses on the formation of complexes of signs, which cohere both internally with each other, and externally with the context in which they are planned. In the context of ELT coursebooks, they form a coherent whole with the organisation and structure, the design of both the coursebook and each component unit, the relation between tasks and texts. This function works in the form of discourse markers and devices within each coursebook and unit. It explains how ELT coursebooks communicate to the teacher and YLs about the organisation of ELL. The semiotic devices implemented here are both within instructional as well as multimodal design (Kress, 2010:144-147, Singapore Wala, 2013:124-127).

Multimodality is an inter-disciplinary approach that defines communication in terms of the systematic description of modes, their semiotic resources and relations, for example image-language interactions and image-language coordination. Multimodality is defined as multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) or multimodal semiotics. It describes the communication practices including textual, oral, linguistic, spatial and visual dimensions defined as modes. MDA as an approach to the investigation of language use focuses on contextually originated meanings of linguistic resources. MDA integrates all relevant communicative modes including gesture, space, sound and visual design in addition to a language (Kress, 2010:79; O'Halloran, 2011:120; Hall, 2012:229-230; Painter, Martin & Unsworth, 2013:1-10). For this paper, MDA seems to be the appropriate approach to apply in the examination of meanings reflected in the multimodal cultural content (O'Halloran, 2008:444-445; Perez-Gonzalez, 2014:181-187).

Multimodality implements many modes to form artefacts for different media. A very mode can be described as a socially shaped and culturally originated semiotic resource for generating meaning. Namely, writing, image, music, layout, gesture, speech, sounds, colours and 3D objects are modes used in the construction of messages. Each mode has a different function and potential for meaning: "image shows what takes too long to read, and writing names what would be difficult to show. Colour is used to highlight specific aspects of the overall message" (Kress, 2010:1). Following O'Halloran's explanations, semiotic resource is to describe resources (modes) which integrate across sensory modalities in multimodal texts (2011:121-122).

Multimodal texts form meanings in multiple articulations. As it is stated by the fathers of multimodality, "the same meanings can often be expressed in different semiotic modes" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001:2, 4). At the level of semiotic production different configurations of discourse, design,



production and distribution may occur. Multimodality defines resemiotization in terms of sounds and pictures receiving functions previously attributed to a language (Iedema, 2013:201-206). A central area of MDA is concerned with inter-semiosis and resemiotization. Inter-semiosis focuses on inter-modal relations originating from the interaction of semiotic choices. Resemiotization describes content that is expressed in various semiotic systems. For example, texts are replaced with images when words are presented at pictures in the multi-semiotic culture. It focuses on the historical and material dimension of representations, stressing the dynamic nature of message formation and social artefacts used in practice, for example coursebooks (Iedema, 2013:208-218).

From a historical perspective, an interest in multimodality has been stimulated by the developments of modern technology including TV and Internet. Modes and media have always co-existed in culturally and historically developed resources. To be precise, a mode relates to the content side while medium refers to the expression side. A mode of writing with medium of book and page have dominated in the Western cultures for centuries. A social semiotic approach to modality aims to describe the potentials and limitations of meanings presented in modes. To compare, the order of the written text is fixed and the elements must be read in the sequence in which they occur. The order of the image text is relatively open (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006:4-5).

Meaning is formed and designed in terms of four domains defined as strata (originated from Hallidayan linguistics<sup>1</sup>). These are discourse, design, production and distribution (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001:4-8). Discourse and design refer to the content stratum. Discourse is the form of knowledge about reality and meaning-resource available in a society. It can be encountered in the semantic objects such as texts, buildings and customs. Discourse deals with the production and organization of meaning about the world from a position of institutions including education. There are usually many discourses available related to a specific aspect of reality. It is always possible to select the most appropriate one suitable for the situation and target audience (Kress, & van Leeuwen, 2001:20-22).

In the context of ELT materials, design involves verbal-visual relationships with the entry point of the page and its reading path (Kress, & van Leeuwen, 2001:18). Design refers to a theory of communication and meaning based on the social (semiotic) world, being defined as a social-semiotic theory of multimodality (Kress, 2010:6). Production is the articulation of semiotic products in the material form. It adds meanings to the form originated from the physical qualities of the materials used. Distribution is the technical re-coding of the semiotic products for purposes of recording such as digital recording. Presently, the functions of production and distribution have been integrated technically to a considerable degree (Kress, & van Leeuwen; 2001:21).

Contextual and grammatical approaches to modality have led to systemic-functional multimodal discourse analysis (SF-MDA), having originated from Halliday's social semiotic approach to meta-

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<sup>1</sup> Halliday views language as a social system created by a set of resources for generating meanings. The meaning of language forms is situated in their systemic connections between the functions played and their context of implementation. It resulted in a systemic functional linguistics (SFL) theory of language, which is defined as a set of resources for meaning-making. SFL aims to describe the linguistic options that are available to learners to construct meanings in a specific context for a specific purpose (Hall, 2016:24-25). To highlight the connection between language use and context, an analytic framework with three interrelated functions has been defined. These functions are ideational, interpersonal and textual ones. The ideational function relates to the representational dimensions of language. The interpersonal function refers to the social dimensions of language. The textual function relates to the construction of coherent and cohesive discourse.

functions (O'Halloran, 2008:443). Following Halliday's meta-functions, the concept of mode in multimodality has three functions – the ideational, interpersonal and textual ones. The ideational function focuses on the illustration of the human world outside the representational system. It is based on the informative features of the target language representing values and knowledge of speakers. In the context of ELT coursebooks, it is content with themes, topics and grammar rules. The interpersonal function defines the representation of social and personal relationships between producers and respondents. In the context of coursebooks, it is realised through the interaction patterns reflected in the design of procedures. In the process of SF linguistics to the visual modality within MDA, the three meta-functions have always been accepted by researchers working in this area (Painter, Martin, & Unsworth, 2013:7). Halliday's view resulted in an increasing recognition of multimodal character of literacy. His theory that learning is an integration of both social and cognitive processes continues Vygotsky's school of learning a FL involves participation in social interactions (Hall, 2016:24-25-26, 55).

Kay O'Halloran introduces the concept of semiotic metaphor to SF-MDA as a tool to construct ideational meaning based on the Hallidayan concept of grammatical metaphor. The purpose has been to extend the grammatical metaphor to the semiotic one to define how verbal and visual modes interact with each other in multimodal texts including visual processes depicted in the illustrations (action, verbal, mental cognition, mental perception) (Painter, Martin, & Unsworth, 2013:69). The semiotic metaphor involves an inter-semiotic stage where a functional element can be reconstructed in a different semiotic code (O'Halloran, 2011:123-124, Hall, 2016:26). Similarly, Kress states that semiotic changes involve changes in meaning during the re-articulation of meaning across different modes, for example from speech to writing, from writing to image. He describes it as transduction, the process of moving the meaning-material from one mode to another, which corresponds to O'Halloran's concept of semiotic metaphor (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006:39; Kress, 2010:129).

Multimodal social semiotics stimulates evaluation and assessment of different modes, leading to better comprehension of design in materials and media. It is assumed that cultural technologies of representation, production and distribution are used as developments (Kress, 2010:16,19). The social-semiotic theory focuses on meaning. Meaning is produced in various social environments and interactions while a sign as the basic unit of semiotics exists in all modes, being a fusion of form and meaning. A focus is on sign-making in social actions rather than use, which distinguishes the social-semiotic theory from other forms of semiotics (O'Halloran, 2008:443). Then, signs are become the semiotic resources of culture. Each sign carries a specific meaning and form. The multimodal social semiotic theory encompasses theory of representation and communication (Kress, 2010:54-61, 105). As meanings belong to culture, the system they are represented verbally and visually are culturally and historically specific. In addition, they are realized differently in each mode. Then, grammar of visual design is to explain the matter. A grammar in this context is described as a set of elements and rules underlying culture-specific forms of verbal communication (Kress, & van Leeuwen, 2006:2-3, 41). As the variations between cultures show differences in representation and meaning, cultural content in ELT coursebooks can be examined in this context.

The investigation is basically linguistic as to provide a description of the cultural content, occurrence and image-language relations. It is partly pragmatic as social semiotics and multimodal

dimension are investigated in ELT resources with the respective meaning potentials for cultural forms (Kress, 2010:59). If ELT materials are important elements of a classroom, their design has a significant impact on providing input to YLs, who are to develop holistically in the period of globalization. Here comes the inspiration for the project and enquiry of the cultural content in ELT coursebooks for YLs. In addition, little research has been conducted on the visual aspects as well as image-language relations in ELT coursebooks for YLs (Harwood, 2014:29).

## **2. Problem Statement**

Following the latest trend in the subject literature and ethnographic perspective of teaching culture, the investigation of language and image plus culture is perceived in this project as a single entity (Hall, 2016:149-154). The dilemma is to what extent ELT materials for children cater for multimodality of cultural content. There is still insufficient data related to cultural content in ELT materials in the context of SF-MDA. It seems that far too little attention has been paid to image-language relations in the design of ELT materials. In addition, the project attempts to develop an analytic framework for the investigation of cultural content to understand social and cultural meanings embodied in ELT materials.

## **3. Research Questions**

For this project, the following questions were addressed:

- a) What are the characteristic features of multimodality in English coursebooks for older children?
- b) What are the image-language relations in cultural content of English coursebooks for older children?

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose is to investigate the multimodality of cultural content in English coursebooks implemented in Polish primary education (grades 4-6). The focus is on the image-language relations as the interplay between verbal and non-verbal semiotics in the construction of the cultural content, including a range of topics, texts and illustrations. The idea is to reveal how visual and verbal content forms social meanings in print artefacts. It is assumed that verbal and non-verbal modes can reinforce each other (present the same issue in another ways) or play an enhancement, a projection and complementary role (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001:38-52; O'Halloran, 2008:443-475; Perez-Gonzalez, 2014:181-187), which will be investigated in this research project.

## **5. Research Methods**

Numerous procedures have been developed to measure MDA, which belongs to the qualitative research methods. MDA requires a description of various modalities that are designed to form multimodal texts (Painter, Martin, & Unsworth, 2013:2). As this project is the preliminary examination of the printed ELT coursebooks in terms of multimodality, it follows both quantitative and qualitative approaches that are performed in two stages respectively. The first stage involves the analysis of the cultural content in

ELT coursebooks for older YLs with the focus on the core modes. The second stage involves the analysis of image-language relations with the focus on the visual-verbal semiotic in the cultural discourse. The visual methodologies are implanted here to use various images for answering the research questions.

The investigation is initiated by a sample selection. ELT coursebooks had to fulfil six criteria modified for this evaluation as follows:

1. Universal criteria: related to English language education (grades 4-6) and YLs' second (foreign) language acquisition in the international context.
2. Local criteria: related to English language education and YLs' second (foreign) language acquisition in Polish context.
3. Age-specific criteria: related to the age of the target learners (between 9 and 11 years old); their holistic and systemic development, previous experience with English, interests and needs.
4. Content specific criteria: related to the cultural content (home and English culture) offered in the cultural sections.
5. Media-specific criteria (multimodal criteria): related to the core modes of image, language, sound and music generating meanings in the cultural content.
6. Intermodal criteria: related to the visual and verbal semiotics depicting the cultural content in ELT coursebooks for older YLs.

Several studies on materials have been carried out on checklists of flexible criteria. Then, it is assumed that the criteria listed above are developed with usability, adaptability and flexibility as well as principles of YLs' FL acquisition (Tomlinson, 2013a:31-32; Tomlinson, 2015:280). For this investigation three series of the coursebooks are selected and coded respectively: 6 coursebooks. They were published by Pearson Education, Express Publishing and Oxford. The project is based on the data obtained during the review studies for Polish Ministry of Education. The instrument is designed for the analysis and entitled: *Children's coursebook evaluation: a checklist for multimodality of cultural content in grades 4-6*. The first part of the checklist is composed of four major sets of the following groups of questions:

1. Questions about *context and user definition* relate to the description of the target group (their assumed knowledge and language skills).
2. Questions about *objectives and scope* relate to the description of the general learning objectives, the detailed objectives (extra objectives such as multicultural education).
3. Questions about *content and coverage* relate to the teaching cultural content and topics promoted in ELT materials for older YLs.
4. Questions about *multimodality* relate to the multimodal aspects of cultural content only and include four following sub-groups (Perez-Gonzalez, 2014:194):
  - a) Questions about the core mode of *image itself* relate to the visual presentation of the cultural content in ELT materials (static pictures, illustrations, drawings, maps) and their meanings.
  - b) Questions about the core mode of *language* relate to the verbal presentation of the cultural content in ELT materials (speech and static writing: new phrases and sentences).
  - c) Questions about the core mode of *sound* relate to the verbal presentation of the cultural content in ELT materials (soundtracks, recordings of readings and dialogues).

- d) Questions about the core mode of *music* relate to the verbal and musical presentation of the cultural content in the materials (performed songs and chants).

As far as the visual methodology is concerned the interpretation of visual content in terms of the meanings is restricted here to the site of image itself. A critical understanding of images involves the compositional modality only, including content, colour, size and spatial organisation in relation to texts (Rose, 2012:19-20, 27-30; 346-347). The process requires a precise identification of feedback and analysis of data. The results from the evaluation of the cultural content are recorded and compiled on charts.

The second stage of this project focuses on the qualitative analysis of the inter-semiotic relations, the image-language relations constructing ideational meanings in ELT coursebooks. The focus is on expansion and projection of meanings in the cultural content (Unsworth, 2006:1175). This part of the project is the MDA of visual images from the selected cultural content. It involves the process of coding and quantitative analysis. Many questions can be asked about image-language relations and components, colour, size and knowledge presented (Rose, 2012:81-104). In this project, the second part of the checklist (Unsworth; 2006:1175) includes the following questions:

- 1) Questions about *concurrence* related to the image-language agreement and correspondence (clarification, exposition and exemplification).
- 2) Questions about *complementarity* related to the image-language supplement in terms of augmentation or divergence.
- 3) Questions about *enhancement* related to the image-language enrichment in terms of manner, condition and space.
- 4) Questions about *projection* related to the image-language presentation (verbal and mental) in the context of perception and cognition.

The project follows Stöckl's framework for the investigation of the semiotic resources and the examination of cultural content including four core modes such as image, language, sounds and music (Stöckl, 2004:14, Perez-Gonzalez, 2014:192-194). It is the initial MDA in this context and will be limited to the selected medial variants. To exemplify the complex character of MDA in the print texts, the project will follow Halliday's framework (2004) improved by Unsworth (2006:1175) and adopted here to ELT coursebooks. To investigate meanings of the images, three following systems were accepted:

- 1) Information value: refers to the location of elements with the informational principles to different sections of the image (e.g. left and right, top and bottom).
- 2) Salience: refers to the degree of attractiveness realised by different factors such as placement, size, colour and others which are to catch the viewer's attention.
- 3) Framing: refers to presence or absence of framing devices that connect or disconnect elements of the image, underlying or concealing their composition (Kress, & van Leeuwen, 2006:177). The process requires an accurate analysis of data and narrative description. The final step is to compare the answers collected in the two stages of the project.

## 6. Findings

The results indicate that ELT coursebooks for YLs form specific multimodal artefacts. The opening results serve as the introduction to the central data and include the following categories:

1. The target language users are older YLs (between 9 and 11 years old) in the middle stage of primary schooling in 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades of primary schools.
2. The teaching objectives are listed as linguistic skills to be learnt by them and defined in the operational forms. The extra objectives include ICC, development of the positive attitude to other languages and cultures.
3. The cultural content is listed under the topics. The major tendency is to introduce initially the topics linked with the nearest background of YLs. These are topics linked with family and school, and only later topics related both to “home culture” – *My country* – and the target language culture – *Other countries*. The detailed coverage of topics related to teaching culture in the selected English coursebooks for YLs are presented in the following tables. Table 01 depicts the results collected from the first series.

**Table 01.** Development of ICC in CB1 English coursebooks for YLs.

Coursebook CB1	Home (Polish) Culture = Projects	English (Anglo-Saxon) Culture = Culture Today
<b>Coursebooks for YLs (5-6 grades)</b>	<u>My family</u> Home (my dream home) <u>My school routine</u> Festivals in your country Hobbies and free time activities Inventors (the USA) A great place to visit Our school rules A meal plan Money tips	<u>Families in the UK</u> Homes in the UK <u>School life (the UK)</u> Festivals (Halloween, Bonfire night) Free time (the UK) A great inventor (the UK) Great places to visit (the UK + varied) School rules in the UK Vitamins and You How to be sensible with money

CB 1 – two coursebooks from the 1<sup>st</sup> series (Pearson Education).

The cultural sections related to English (the UK) culture are entitled “Culture today” while the sections devoted to home culture are entitled “Project”. They share the same major topic. A range of topics starts from the subjects close to the YLs’ background to move towards more general, international and practical topics. The instructions are provided in Polish and English. The important finding is that instructions include a direct reference to a visual element in each project, for example “find a photo of your family”, “draw a picture of your dream home”. Therefore, it can be assumed that FL education for YLs will result in both the verbal and visual outcomes, supporting visual literacy. Table 2 below depicts results collected from the second series of ELT coursebooks.

**Table 02.** Development of ICC in the CB2 English coursebooks for YLs.

Coursebook CB2	Home (Polish) Culture = Portfolio	English (Anglo-Saxon) Culture = Across cultures + CLIL
<b>Coursebooks for YLs (4-5 grades)</b>	<u>Schools in your country</u> Famous museums in your country Unusual festivals in your country Theme Parks in your country  <u>National animals of your country</u> Traditional musical instrument from your country	<u>School Days Around the World</u> (Where ... the place! - geography) Famous Houses around the World (Green Careers - nature, ecology) Setting the world on fire (unusual festivals) (The food chain – science) Theme Parks with a Difference (Cryptology - maths) <u>National animals from around the World! (A Poem – literature)</u> World Musical Instrument Experience (My green Grandma – nature, ecology)

CB 2 – two coursebooks from the 2<sup>nd</sup> series (Express Publishing)

As the table shows, the cultural sections related to English culture are entitled “Across cultures” and combined with CLIL sections entitled “CLIL Time”. Here the sections devoted to home culture are entitled “Portfolio”. There are two types of portfolio implemented in turns: the standard one and the online one marked with “@” symbol. The sections devoted to home culture and English culture share the same subject. This finding supports previous research depicted in Table 1, which showed that initially the subject close to the YLs’ background is introduced and then more international matters. Subsequently, the topics vary and are to catch YLs’ attention that is supported by CLIL sections related to the elements from geography, nature, science, maths, literature and ecology. The instructions are provided in English. The important finding is that each topic is presented in the international context (the examples are from different countries, e.g. Australia, Russia or Turkey). The results indicate that culture education for YLs embraces also topics from around the world, not only related to the BANA countries, while English is used as the vehicle for communication. Table 3 below depicts results collected from the third series of ELT coursebooks.

**Table 03.** Development of ICC in the CB3 English coursebooks for YLs.

Coursebook CB3	Home (Polish) Culture = Your Project	English (Anglo-Saxon) Culture = Culture page
<b>Coursebooks for YLs (5-6 grades)</b>	My year, my life <u>Describing animals</u> Medicine, transport and communication Writing favourite recipes Drawing a map of your country Writing about favourite book, film or TV <u>Describing family in your country</u> Writing about a country, the future or an incident Writing about your capital city, the ideal city or your town Writing about famous people from your country, teenagers and parents, dreams	A typical year in Britain <u>Animals</u> The National Health Service Meals and meal times The USA Entertainment <u>Families in Britain</u> Canada  New York  Famous Britons

CB3 – two coursebooks from the 3<sup>rd</sup> series (Oxford)

The table above shows that English cultural sections are entitled “Culture page” while “Your project” is designed for home culture teaching. The project section, which is supported with sub-sections related to the useful language, offers topics to choose one out of three options to write about. A range of topics vary from individual to the general areas of interest related to lifestyle in the BANA countries. The project part focuses on the home culture with a direct instruction to design the visual part (some illustrations, maps or pictures). The project section includes also pronunciation and song subsections. The instructions are provided in English. These findings have important implications for developing YLs’ autonomy (a choice one out of three topics) for home culture teaching.

As far as the multimodal character of the cultural content is concerned, table 04 below presents a designated range of topics (underline in the tables 01, 02 and 03) with the respective modes. For this project, the following topics were selected: families, school and animals. Each of them is investigated in two different series of ELT materials.

**Table 04.** Multimodality of the cultural content in ELT coursebooks.

Coursebooks The series	Culture content Totals	Core modes				
		Image	Language		Sound	Music
		Static pictures	Speech new phrases	Static writing sentences	Soundtracks	Songs
CB1	Families	5	6	27	2	-
CB1	School	3	11	33	2	-
<b>CB1</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>-</b>
CB2	School	2	26	21	2	-
CB2	Animals	9	25	42	2	-
<b>CB2</b>	<b>Totals:</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>-</b>
CB3	Animals	16	23	52	6	1
CB3	Families	4	-	52	2	1
<b>CB3</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>

CB 1 – two coursebooks from the 1<sup>st</sup> series.

CB 2 – two coursebooks from the 2<sup>nd</sup> series

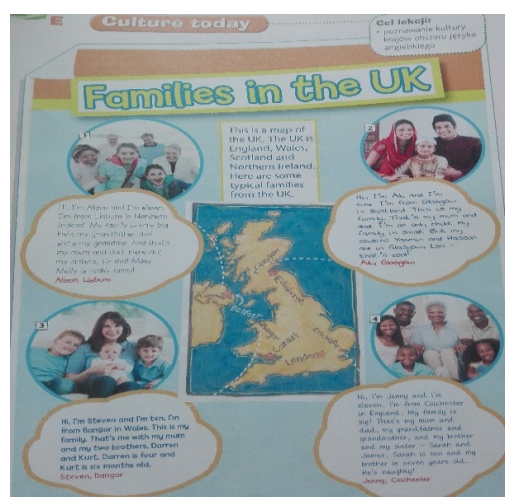
CB 3 – two coursebooks from the 3<sup>rd</sup> series.

The results presented above illustrate the character of multimodality in the selected cultural sections. A rapid increase in the number and size of static pictures related to the core mode of image is clear and indisputable. The findings confirm the significant function of the visual input in ELT materials. The most striking result to emerge from this model data is the different number of pictures provided in “Animals” topic in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> series. As the table shows, the core mode of language was divided into speech, which for this project had been limited to the new phrases and static writing, which had been restricted to the sentences. The number of new phrases offered in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> series is similar (between 17 and 23) with the exception for the 2<sup>nd</sup> series with a big number of 51 new expressions. As far as the static writing is analysed, the number of sentences in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> series is also similar (between 60 and 63). However, the 3<sup>rd</sup> series is the exception with the enormous number of 104 sentences. The issue that emerges from these findings confirms the leading role of verbal input in ELT materials for older YLs. The core mode of sound indicates the equal number of four soundtracks (readings, dialogues) in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> series. In comparison, the result from the 3<sup>rd</sup> series increased doubly reaching eight recordings. It



is apparent from this table that the core mode of music and its role decreases with the age of learners. Namely, there is any songs in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> series. The cultural content in the 3<sup>rd</sup> series includes two songs per two sections. It can then be assumed that the most significant is the function of the verbal cultural input.

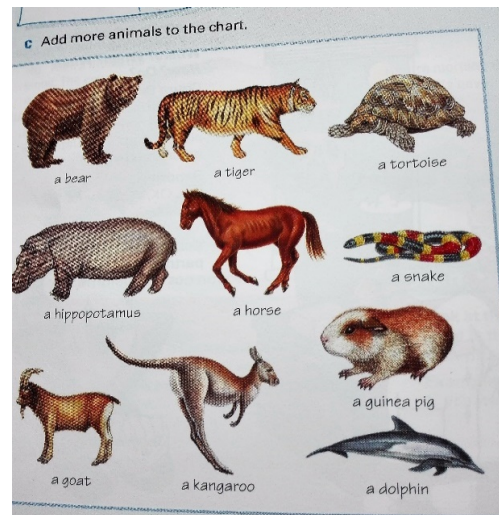
The results from the second part of the project related to the image-language relations provided the thought-provoking data on the inner construction of the visual and verbal input in the cultural sections. These are model units which consist of an image (simple or complex) and meaning related to it by content. The results related to the expansion and projection of meanings brought the most challenging details. Specifically, the category of concurrence defines the ideational equivalence between images and texts. A few samples of the concurrence were found in the examined cultural content. The visual and verbal agreement was observed in three following subcategories: clarification, exposition and exemplification. The result start with the clarification presented in Figure 01 when the image explains the text.



**Figure 01.** Example of clarification in CB1 (Culture Today - Today 2, p.12).

The image includes four small pictures, the classical portraits of families described in the text. They are united by the UK map sketched in the middle where their places of living are marked with dots. The title of the section, the new phrases in the small table and title introduce the section. The size of texts, which are presented in different print each, is like the size of pictures. The whole illustration is in blue colour and its tones. The content depicts English families living in the UK out of whom four models can be distinguished. The first one is a big family including the white grandparents, parents and children. The second model is a single-parent family with the white mum and children. The third one is a small Indian family, the parents and single child. Finally, there is a big black family with the grandparents, parents and children. This finding indicates that English cultural content embraces multicultural and multilingual aspects – people living in the UK. It also shows children that English is the international language.

Another example for the concurrence of the meaning is exposition, which may apply to relations between single entities represented visually and verbally.



**Figure 02.** Example of exposition in CB3 (Your project – Project 3, p.26).

This finding has brought ten small pictures of animals that can be used by YLs in the project about home culture. Figure 02 is the re-expression of meaning between the visual form and verbal form at the equal level of generality. The animals are similar in size and depicted vividly in the white background. The whole illustration gives the impression of colour dictionary.

Further results contribute to the concurrence of ideational meaning by a few samples of exemplification. There are two possible descriptions and models: when an image instantiates a text or a text instantiates an image.



**Figure 03.** Example of exemplification in CB3 (Culture - Project 3, p.22).

The cultural content in figure 03 is the sample of exemplification when the text about families in the UK specifies the image next to it. There are clear borders between the images (the standard British house, traditional wedding picture and portrait of the older man) and the respective texts. The section starts with the topic and instructions in English. The sizes of the texts and images are similar. However, the texts discuss more details in comparison to the items presented in the images. Figure 04 below is the sample of exemplification when the image is the model of what is in the text.



**Figure 04.** Example of exemplification in CB2 (Across cultures – Incredible 5, p.38).

The cultural content depicted in the section entitled “Across cultures” in figure 04 focuses on school days around the world including Australia, Colombia and Russia. It can be regarded as one big image or poster with three smaller elements depicting different learners in the school buildings in the background. It is entitled “School Days around the World” and marked with the characteristic icons of the book and globe. In addition, the verbal part is integrated on the left site and blended in the image. All small pictures are vivid while three colours (green, blue and red) are used to initiate a text for the respective country. An implication of this is that YLs will associate the colour with the specific country discussed in the text. Another consequence is, as the title of the section states, that English can be used to discuss different cultures.

The image-language relations can be also described as the complementarity of meaning. Specifically, these are two types of meanings in modes: augmentation or divergence. Figure 05 below depicts augmentation.

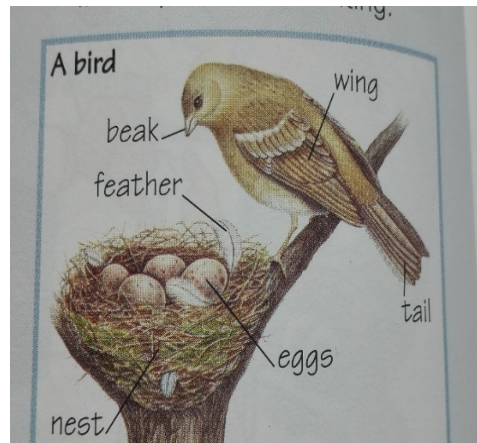


**Figure 05.** Example of complementarity in CB2 (Across cultures – Incredible 5, p.68).

The cultural content presented in figure 05 represents the ideational complementarity with the focus on augmentation. In other words, three texts extend three respective images of wild animals representing the USA, Turkey and Russia. The animals depicted are serious and wild in the yellowish and

bluish background. The image-language size is balanced giving the impression of the one united entity. Here also colours are used to highlight the names of the animals in the text. It is entitled “School Days around the World” and marked with the characteristic icons of the book and globe. Correspondingly to the previous example in this project, this section starts with the name, topic, a selection of new phrases and symbols that indicate the international character of environment.

The last sample of expansion in this project is enhancement of meaning which may refer to the casual, temporal, condition, manner and spatial relations between image and language. Figure 06 below illustrates enhancement of the meaning in terms of space.



**Figure 06.** Example of enhancement in CB3 (Your project – Project 3, p.26).

The illustration in figure 06 originates from the cultural section about animals. It shows a bird sitting next to its nest with the most important elements (parts of its body and home) defined. It is entitled “A bird” in the left corner and presented like images in the biology coursebook. As the result, the picture enriches YLs’ knowledge about the species and hopefully develops the additional knowledge about its place of living.

Finally, the project brought some illustrations of projection in the construction of meaning. It may refer to verbal and mental type with perception or cognition of ideational meaning. Figure 07 presents the sample from the cultural section on literature within CLIL part.



**Figure 07.** Example of projection in CB2 (CLIL – Incredible 5, p.69).



The image in figure 7 provides a rich selection of visual-verbal relations in generating meanings about the whole seasonal year. It is entitled “A Poem for all Seasons” and marked with the characteristic icons of the book for “CLIL Time” section. It presents a few new phrases in the table on the left. The illustrations depict the changes occurring in nature during four seasons. The process is exemplified in the framework of the verbal and visual configuration with the characteristic symbols, realia and colours. The visual and verbal elements form one vivid entity in yellowish and greenish background, which seems to be a page torn out of the notebook. The implication is that this section will stimulate YLs’ perception and cognition of the matter, support the process of learning and remembering facts as well as train YLs’ visual literacy.

## 7. Conclusion

The project contributes to the existing data about multicultural education reflected in the multimodality of ELT coursebooks for older children. The present study provides the additional evidence with respect to a wide variety of topics offered for teaching ICC in these resources. The project confirms previous research on materials development which promote teaching of both home and English (international) aspects of culture in a various degree.

The current findings add to a growing body of literature on SF-MDA in the framework of ELT materials. Namely, the changes in the design and composition of the visual and verbal content are observed. On the one hand, the verbal forms dominate in the construction of meaning in ELT materials. On the other hand, the increasing role of visual content is detected. The latest tendency is to design verbal and visual elements together within one big frame as one entity. All elements are depicted in harmony with bright, optimistic and clear colours. Consequently, the borders are integrated and the passages are interlaced with the respective visual elements.

The report is subject to at least three limitations. First, the project applies to ELT print materials for YLs only as the investigation has included a few coursebooks selected from three series. Second, the sample for the investigation was further limited to the cultural content and sections only. Third, as the list of topics offered for teaching culture in the ELT coursebook was very long, a chain of the areas for the investigation was formed. Further research and analysis concerning SF-MDA and image-language relations in the resources for ELT are strongly recommended. More research is required on the image-language-sound-music relations.

The priority is to focus on YLs’ holistic development including visual literacy in primary education. To live in the globalized world, YLs are to develop multimodal ICC and learn about the powerful role of multimodality. Taken together, these findings suggest that verbal-visual relations reflected in ELT materials for children are in the process of big changes. The investigation maintains the view that ELT coursebooks should support YLs in the reflection on different cultures experienced by them and home and in the world. The resources should also sustain children’s interest in creating cultural meanings that can be reflected in different modes and modalities.

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